

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended): A method for preparing cooked rice; the method comprising the steps of:

steaming raw rice having been subjected to a washing and soaking step to effect gelatinization of starch inside rice grains;

cooling and individuating the ~~resulting~~ rice to remove moisture present on the surface of each rice grain;

frying the ~~resulting~~ rice with an oil to form an oil film over the surface of each rice grain;  
and

boiling the ~~resulting~~ rice having an oil film over the surface of each rice grain together with seasonings and water.

2. (Original): A cooked rice prepared according to the method as set forth in Claim 1, wherein boiled rice grains have an outer layer to the depth of 0.5 mm from the surface of the grain and an inner layer deeper than 0.5 mm from the surface; the outer layer and the inner layer have a moisture content difference of 2.5 % to 5 % between them.

Amendment

Application No. 10/644,772

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3. (Original): The cooked rice according to Claim 2, wherein the cooked rice shows a diffusion area of  $2,500 \text{ mm}^2$  to  $3,000 \text{ mm}^2$ , when 10 g of the cooked rice is charged into a cylindrical container having a diameter of 25 mm and is subjected to free fall therefrom at a height of 30 cm.